

# **Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Grant Program**

# About VLCF

- 18-member Board represents every Congressional District

Sec. of Natural Resources + 11 appointed by Governor, 4 by the House, 2 by the Senate – Director of DCR serves as Executive Secretary

- Created in 1992, first funded in 2000
- Grant rounds in FY00, FY01, FY05, FY06
- \$21.4 million awarded so far, to protect 20,266 acres

# VLCF Funding in this grant round

- Approximately \$3 million
  - \$1.5 million in FY09 and \$1.5 million in FY10
- Grant round planned to open August 15 with a closing date of Friday, October 10
  - Subject to Board authorization on 8/7/08
- PLEASE NOTE: 10 copies of applications must be received by 5 p.m. on the closing date
- Interagency review process
- Board will meet in January for grant approval

# VLCF Funding and Scoring Categories

Funds are divided equally among four primary categories:

- (1) natural area protection;
- (2) open spaces and parks;
- (3) farmlands and forest preservation; and
- (4) historic area preservation.

- At least one third of the funds must be used to secure easements to be held or co-held by a public body.
- Up to 50 percent of a project's cost may be reimbursed with a VLCF grant.

# Grant Application Scoring

- Grant applications are scored by an interagency taskforce:
  - Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
    - Natural Heritage
    - Planning & Recreation Resources
  - Dept. of Historic Resources
  - Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services
  - Dept. of Forestry
  - Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
  - Virginia Outdoors Foundation

# Scoring Criteria

Criteria are based on the four primary categories, with 80 points in each category:

- open spaces and parks;
- historic area preservation;
- farmlands and forest preservation;
- natural area protection.

# Additional Scoring Criteria

**Additional criteria are applied, up to 27 points.**

## 1. VOP Identified Need

Degree to which a parcel satisfies resource conservation needs as identified in the *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)* or in a local comprehensive plan.

- Meets a resource conservation need identified in the VOP and in a local comprehensive plan = 3 points
- Meets a resource conservation need identified in the VOP or in a local comprehensive plan = 2 points
- Not identified in VOP or in a local comprehensive plan = 0 points

VOP is online at

[www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/vop.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/vop.shtml).

# Additional Scoring Criteria, *continued*

## 2. Water Quality Benefit

Extent to which the parcel will protect water quality through the use of permanent riparian buffers that are at least 35 ft. wide.

Maximum 4 points

- Permanent buffers or streamside fencing on all streams/rivers throughout the property = 4 points
- Permanent buffers or streamside fencing on a portion of the streams/rivers in the property = 2 points
- No permanent buffers = 0 points





## **Parks and Open Space Category**

Applications for public recreational and/or open space purposes will be evaluated according to the degree the project:

- ✓ Acquires land or a conservation easement that provides increased public access to state water offering recreational potential.
- ✓ Acquires lands or easements adjacent to existing parks, protected conservation areas, or other recreational resources that expand and protect public conservation or recreational interests.

## **Parks and Open Space Category, *continued***

- ✓ Protects scenic viewsheds or land important to the protection of any federally designated Wild and Scenic River or American Heritage River in or adjacent to Virginia, Virginia's Scenic Rivers, designated Scenic Roads, and Virginia Byways, and/or recreational trails, including greenways or blueways.
- ✓ Supports local and/or regional comprehensive plans for parks, open space, and recreational facilities, and/or contributes to the protection of a state, regionally, or locally identified conservation corridor.
  - ✓ Name and page number of plan must be cited.

## **Parks and Open Space Category, *continued***

- ✓ Addresses a need identified in the Virginia Outdoors Plan.
  - ✓ Applicant must specify VOP page number.
- ✓ Availability of land for public use, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, or wildlife watching.
- ✓ Conserves land in a densely populated or rapidly developing area.
  - ✓ Densely populated is defined as a locality with population of 90,000 or more, or a locality designated by the Commonwealth as an incorporated City, regardless of size.
  - ✓ “Rapidly developing” is defined as property identified in the Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment Outside the Urban Fringe Vulnerability Model with a threat value of 5.

## **Parks and Open Space Category, *continued***

- ✓ Site is threatened by development.
  - ✓ A threatened site is defined as property documented to be on the market currently or recently, in an estate that is currently being settled, or adjacent to similar property which is on the market or sold in the past year.

**Maximum score in each category is 80 points.**

Specific scoring criteria for this category are listed in Appendix 1 of the grant manual.

# Appendix 1

## Scoring Sheet Criteria – Open Space and Parks Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p><b>1) Public Access to State Waters:</b> Acquires land or an easement on land which provides increased public access to state waters offering recreational potential. <b>Maximum score 13</b></p>		<p>Public access to state waters that provides boating, fishing, and beach/bank swimming opportunities = 13 Public access that provides two of those recreational opportunities = 10 Public access that provides one of those recreational opportunities = 5</p>
<p><b>2) Adjacency to Parks and Conserved Lands:</b> Acquires lands or easements adjacent to existing parks, protected conservation areas, or other recreational resources that expand and protect public conservation or recreational interests. <b>Maximum score 10</b></p>		<p>Acquisition or easement adjacent to park or conservation area that will allow full public use on the new property = 10 Acquisition or easement adjacent to park or conservation area, with limited public use = 7 Acquisition or easement contiguous to park or conservation area, with no public use = 5</p>

## Open Space and Parks Category Scoring Sheet, *continued*

Criterion	Score	Notes
<b>3) Scenic Resources Protection:</b> Protects scenic viewsheds or land important to the protection of any federally designated Wild and Scenic River or American Heritage River in or adjacent to Virginia, Virginia's Scenic Rivers, designated Scenic Roads, and Virginia Byways, and/or recreational trails, including greenways or blueways. <b>Maximum score 10</b>		Conserves land adjacent to, or in direct viewshed of, one of the listed resources = 10 Conserves land adjacent to, or in direct viewshed of, a potential resource identified in VOP = 7
<b>4) Alignment with State, Regional, or Local Plans:</b> Supports local and/or regional comprehensive plans for parks, open space, and recreational facilities, and/or contributes to the protection of a state, regionally, or locally identified conservation corridor. Name and Page # of plan cited. <b>Maximum score 9</b>		If project site/corridor is specifically mentioned in regional/local plan, or identified by Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment = 9 If area of project has general reference in regional/local plan = 5

## Open Space and Parks Category Scoring Sheet, *continued*

Criterion	Score	Notes
<b>5) Virginia Outdoors Plan</b> <b>Need:</b> Addresses a need identified in the <i>Virginia Outdoors Plan</i> . Applicant must specify VOP Page #. <b>Maximum score 9</b>		Specific numbered need from regional section of VOP = 9 General Need = 5
<b>6) Public Utilization:</b> Availability of land for public use, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, or wildlife watching. <b>Maximum score 10</b>		Open for public utilization = 10 Public use for more than one day per year = 5 Public use one day per year = 3 No public use = 0



## Open Space and Parks Category Scoring Sheet, *continued*

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>7) <b>Densely Populated and Developing Areas:</b> Conserves land in a densely populated or rapidly developing area. Densely populated is defined as a locality with population of 90,000 or more, or a locality designated by the Commonwealth as an incorporated City, regardless of size. Rapidly developing is defined as property identified in the VCLNA Outside the Urban Fringe Vulnerability Model with a threat value of 5. <b>Maximum score 9</b></p>		<p>Densely populated locality = 8 Threat value of 5 in VCLNA model = 5</p>
<p>8) <b>Degree of Threat:</b> Site is threatened by development. A threatened site is defined as property documented to be on the market currently or recently, in an estate that is currently being settled, or adjacent to similar property which is on the market or sold in the past year. <b>Maximum score 10</b></p>		<p>Currently on the market or in an estate = 10 Recently on the market = 8 Adjacent to similar property on the market or sold within the previous year = 5</p>

# *Historic Area Preservation Scoring Criteria*

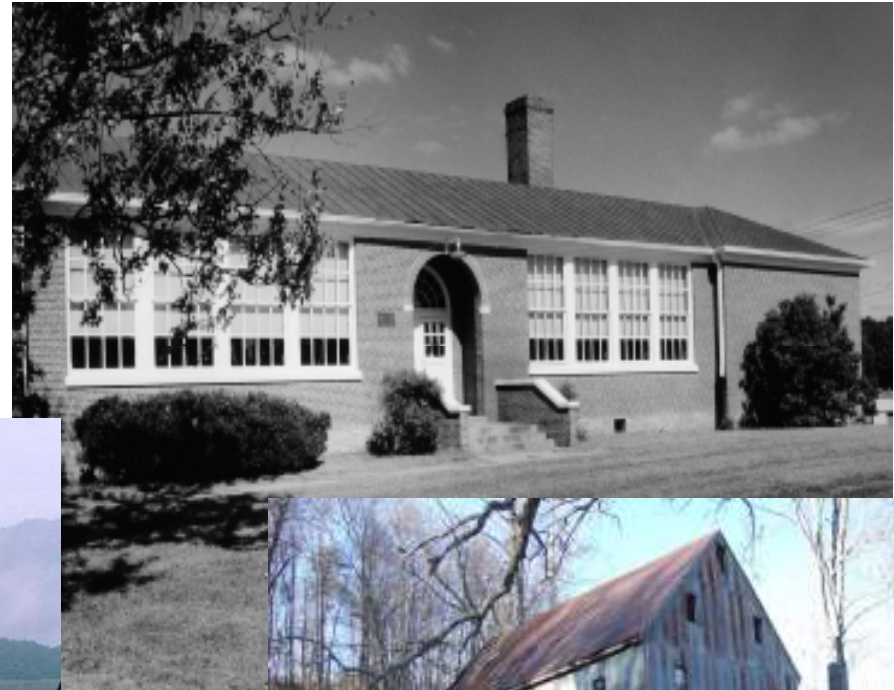
## (1) Historic Significance

Establishes what kind of resource is to be protected

- ▶ Battlefield, Cultural Landscape, Agricultural Complex, Archaeological Site, etc.

Will the project protect or preserve a resource that:

- (A) Is listed (or has been determined eligible) for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR)?



Individually Listed Resources (25 points)



Contributing Resources within Historic District  
(15 points)





(B) Contributes to the integrity, enhances the setting, or provides a buffer for a property listed on the VLR?



(C) Is listed as a Priority I, II, III or IV,  
Class A, B, C, D Battlefield by the Civil War Sites  
Advisory Commission Report of 1993?  
(5-35 points)

## (2) Threat

Is time of the essence?

Threat of demolition, or rare opportunity to protect property?



(3) Demonstrated financial and organizational capacity to manage property and ensure appropriate stewardship of historic resources:

- ▶ Property Managed according to Historic Structures Report (15 points)
- ▶ Property managed according to general resource management plan (10 points)
  - ▶ Plans to develop management plan (5 points)

*Note: HSR and any plans for property should be submitted with application; scope of work should be consistent with Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*



## Broad Benefits and Public Support

- (4) Will the project complement or enhance other cultural or historic resources or preservation activities; -OR- Does the project represent a unique cultural resource opportunity in the geographic area? (5 points possible)
- (5) Will protection or preservation of the resource also further education, research, tourism, or community development? (5 points possible)
- (6) Document public support for the project (include copies of letters of support). (5 points possible)

# **Farmlands and Forest Preservation Category**

- Single funding category (unless \$10 million or more available)
- Separate funding criteria have been developed for agricultural and forestal lands
- Applicant should use the set of criteria that is most appropriate for projects being submitted
- Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

# Farmlands Criteria

- Soil quality is a major determining factor (25 points)
- Parcel will be ranked based on the percentage that it contains of each of the following soils:
  1. “Prime farmland” is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, oilseed, nursery, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, and without intolerable soil erosion. Prime farmland includes land that possesses the above characteristics but is being used currently to produce livestock and timber. It does not include land already in or committed to urban development or water storage.

# Farmlands Criteria

(continued)

2. “Unique farmland” is land other than prime farmland that is used for production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, as determined by the United States Secretary of Agriculture. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality or high yields of specific crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.
3. “Important farmland” other than prime or unique farmland is land that is of statewide or local importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, nursery, oilseed or other agricultural crops, as determined by the appropriate state agency or local government agency, either or both, and that the United States Secretary of Agriculture determines should be considered as farmland for the purposes of this chapter

# Farmlands Criteria

(continued)

- Size of parcel in relation to average agricultural parcel sizes in the locality will also be a determining factor (10 points)
- The agricultural significance of the land within the area in which it is located (8 points)
- The presence of any significant adjacent agricultural land that is in agricultural production or is not now in active agriculture (10 points)
- The vulnerability rank for the parcel as determined by the Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment model (Urban Fringe model) (15 points)

# Farmlands Criteria

(continued)

- The use of Best Management Practices on the farm (4 points)
- Support for the project evidenced in local farmland protection policies (agricultural zoning, agricultural and forestal districts, use value taxation, etc.) (4 points)
- The environmental benefits of retaining the land in agricultural uses (4 points)

## **Category I: Land Evaluation**

### **Soil Productivity (25 points)**

Using soil classes prime, unique or important farmland, score the percentage of project land in each soils class.

Value the soils classified as Prime.

Value the soils classified Unique.

Value the soils classified as Important Farmland.

### **Parcel Size (10 points)**

Using data from the most recent Census of Agriculture, score the size of the farm as it compares to the average sized farm in the locality.

## Category II: Land Use (45 points)

- A. 1) Is the land currently being farmed;  
2) Is the land being farmed by the owner or a family member;  
3) Does at least one family member's primary occupation involve farming this parcel  
4) is this a Century Farm?

*Maximum score 8 points*

- B. To what degree is the land adjacent to or in close proximity to other preserved lands, either in agriculture production or non-active in farming?

*Maximum score 10 points*

- C. What is the vulnerability rank for this parcel as determined by the Urban Fringe VLCNA model?

*Maximum score 15 points*



## Category II (continued)

D. To what extent are Best Management Practices (BMPs) being used/implemented in the normal operation of this farm? Please define.

*Maximum score 4 points*

E. Is the project supported by local farmland protection policies (agricultural zoning, agricultural and forestal districts, use value taxation, etc.)?

*Maximum score 4 points*

F. To what degree will preserving the proposed land in agricultural use secure environmental benefits?

*Maximum score 4 points*

# Forest Lands Category

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation

Grants Workshop

Charlottesville, VA

July 24, 2008



# Contact Information

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Land Acquisition Coordinator  
(434) 220-9091  
larry.mikkelson@dof.virginia.gov

Rob Farrell  
Asst. Director, Forestland Conservation  
(434) 220-9063  
rob.farrell@dof.virginia.gov

Website: <http://www.dof.virginia.gov>

# Farmlands and Forest Category

- This is a single funding category
- Separate funding criteria have been developed for agricultural lands and for forest lands
- Applicant should choose set of criteria that is most appropriate

# **Forest Lands Criteria**

# Forest Lands Criteria

- Land in area of high potential for land use changes; limited forest cover remaining
- Land that:
  - protects drinking water sources
  - is in an important watershed
  - and/or is along an impaired watercourse

# Forest Lands Criteria

- Land that is managed according to a multiple-resource management plan
- Land that is adjacent, or nearby, already conserved land
- Land suitable for long-term scientific research, demonstration, or conservation education

# Forest Lands Criteria

- Land that is within an important conservation area, as identified in the local Comprehensive Plan
- Land that has potential to protect or restore:
  - Threatened and endangered species habitat
  - Diminished natural tree species
  - Historic, archeological, or geologic sites



# **Forest Lands Category Scoring**

# Forest Lands Category Scoring

- Potential for Conversion
  - Determined by:
    - Threat of Conversion
      - High (10 pts); Moderate (5 pts); Low (0 pts)
    - Remaining Forest Cover
      - Low (5 pts); Moderate (2 pts); High (0 pts)
- Maximum Score = 15 points

# Forest Lands Category Scoring

- Protects Watershed
  - Protection of:
    - 1 - Public drinking water source
    - 2 - High quality watershed
    - 3 - Impaired waterway on state 303(d) list
  - Scoring
    - Adjacent to 1, and also 2 or 3 apply = 15 pts
    - Adjacent to 1, or 2, or 3 = 10 pts
    - Within watershed of 1, or 2, or 3 = 5 pts
- Maximum Score = 15 points

# Forest Lands Category Scoring

- Management of Multiple Resources
  - Owner has forest management plan and is following, or intends to follow, recommendations = 15 pts
  - Owner has plan but plans limited implementation = 10 pts
  - Owner has plan, but plans no implementation = 5 pts
- Maximum Score = 15 points

# Forest Lands Category Scoring

- Adjacency to Conserved Lands
  - Adjacent to conserved land = 10 pts
  - Conserved land within 5 miles = 5 pts
  - Within designated conservation area = 5 pts
- Maximum Score = 10 points

# Forest Lands Category Scoring

- Education / Research Potential
  - Public access allowed = 10 pts
  - Limited access allowed = 7 pts
  - No access = 3 pts
- Maximum Score = 10 points

# Forest Lands Category Scoring

- Meets Comprehensive Plan Objectives
  - Meets 1 or more objectives of Comprehensive Plan
- Maximum Score = 5 points

# Forest Lands Category Scoring

- Potential to Protect / Restore
  - Threatened or endangered species
    - On site = 10 pts
    - Habitat or recovery area = 5 pts
  - Restore diminished tree species = 5 pts
  - Protect historic or archeological site = 2 pts
  - Protect geologic site = 2 pts
- Maximum Score = 10 points



# **Forest Lands Category Scoring**

**Total Scoring Potential for Forest  
Lands Category = 80 points**

# Questions?

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Website: <http://www.dof.virginia.gov>

# Forest Lands Category



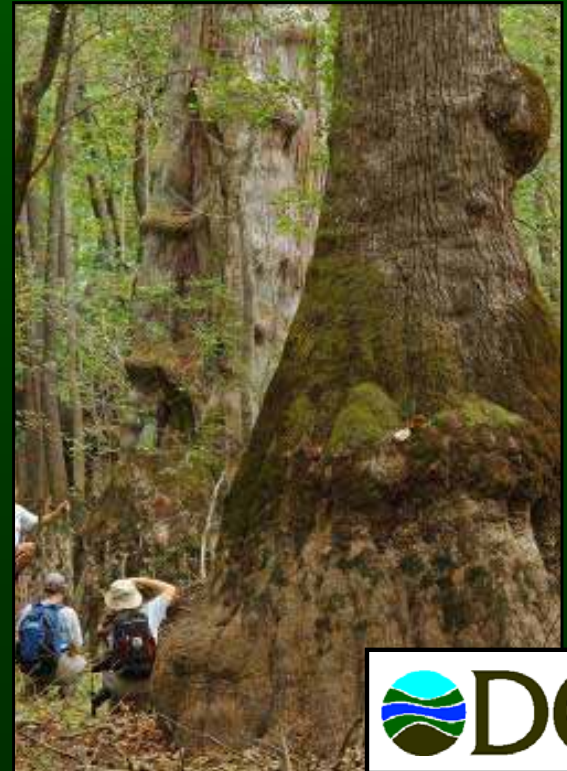
# Natural Area Protection

## Virginia's rich diversity of life

- 2,546 native plant species place Virginia 13<sup>th</sup> in the U.S.
- 737 native vertebrate species place Virginia 10<sup>th</sup> in the U.S.
- One of six biological diversity hotspots in the United States



*Piping Plover G3 S2/FT ST*



# Virginia Natural Heritage Program

- Mission: Identify, protect & conserve Virginia's biological diversity
- Focus on:
  - Rare plants and animals
  - Rare and exemplary natural communities
  - Significant caves and karst features
- 34 Years of methodological development, 22 years of data collection and analysis
- Deliver conservation information to inform land conservation and land use decisions



Manage 54 Natural Area Preserves





# 2008 NatureServe Network

54 U.S. programs

8 Canadian programs

18 Latin American /  
Caribbean programs

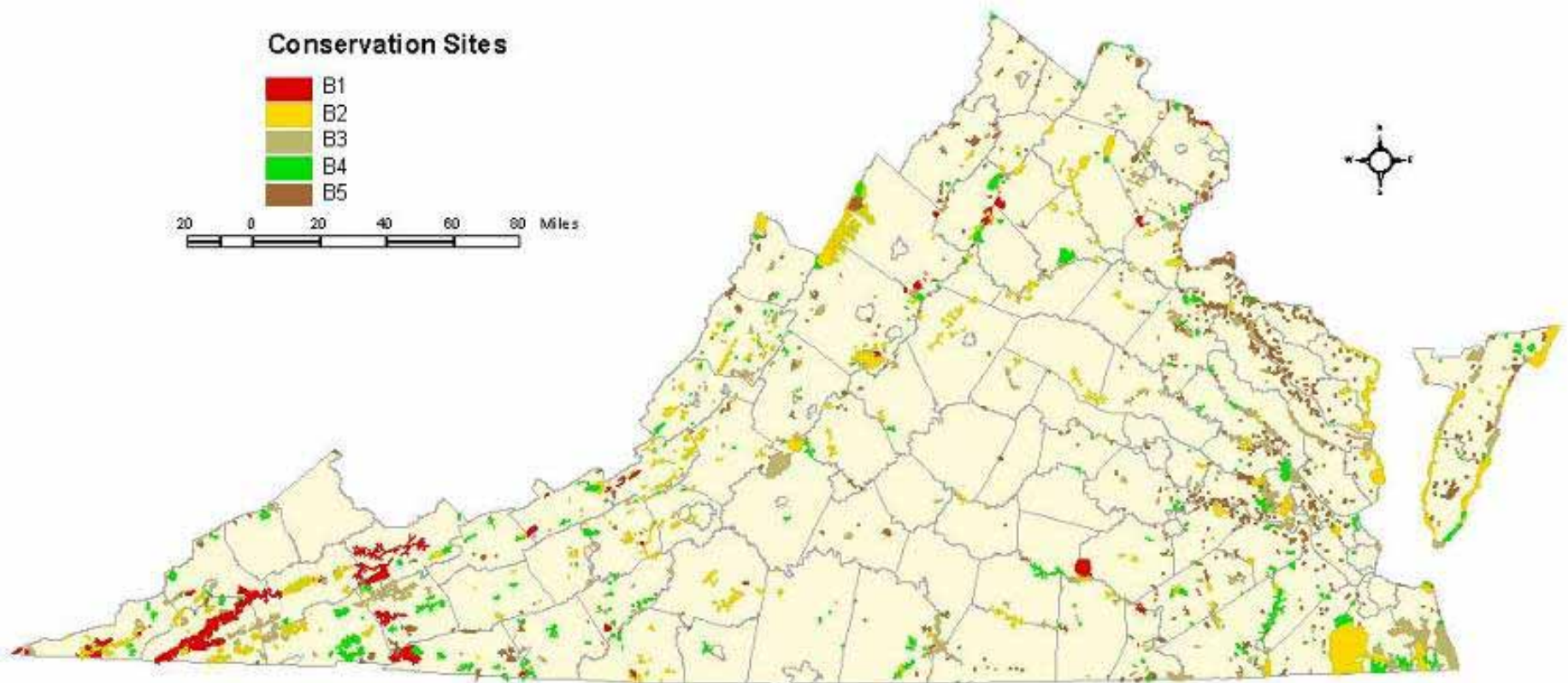


NatureServe



**DCR participates in an International Network of Natural Heritage Programs. The network helps Virginians make informed decisions, and helps carry our efforts and information to conservation decision-makers throughout the Western Hemisphere.**

# Natural Heritage Conservation Sites



# **VA Conservation Lands Needs Assessment**

DCR's Natural Heritage Program, in collaboration with the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program and Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Environmental Studies, have developed a suite of map models aimed at showing conservation priorities in Virginia called the Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment (VCLNA). Key building blocks for any Green Infrastructure Project or land conservation planning effort.



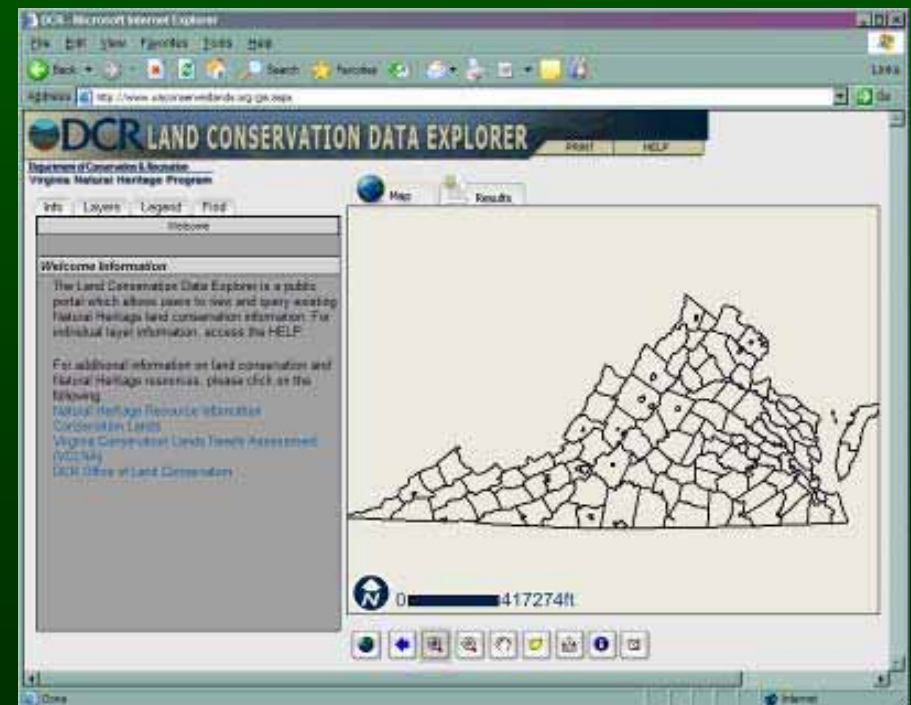


# Watershed Integrity

# Land Conservation Data Explorer

- Publicly accessible Internet Site to access VCLNA and Protected Lands Information
- Open an Internet Browser
- Type in the url [www.vaconserveredlands.org](http://www.vaconserveredlands.org)
- LCDE will appear:
- Also recommend

Accessing Wildlife  
Action Plan Data from:  
[www.bewildvirginia.org](http://www.bewildvirginia.org) or  
[www.vafwis.org](http://www.vafwis.org)



# Natural Heritage Data Explorer

- Password Protected Internet Site to access Sensitive Natural Heritage Plant, Animal, and Natural Community information, VCLNA, Protected Lands and more.
- Free to land trusts and local governments
- Requires license agreement and basic training.
- 40 local governments have agreements

Contact:  
[nhderegister@  
dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:nhderegister@dcr.virginia.gov)



# Natural Areas Category Grant History

		Grant Award	Acres
<b>1999 – 2000</b>	Powers Tract, NW River Watershed	\$286,000	172
	Hickory Hollow Nature Trail	\$150,012	254
<b>January 2001</b>	Garden Creek	\$155,000	623
	Clinch River	\$196,640	458
	Oak Hickory Forest	\$729,250	226
<b>June 2005</b>	Marks and Jacks Islands	\$500,000	2,000
	Gilvary Forest	\$211,602	233
<b>December 2005</b>	Cedars/Fletcher Ford	\$ 68,450	81
	Crow's Nest	\$500,000	1,800
	Brumley Mountain	\$314,059	700
	Clinch River/Pinnacle	\$62,375	64
	Bulls Pond	\$1,500,000	285
<b>June 2007</b>	Gallohan-Surgenor Cave System	\$315,000	330
	Blackwater River Old-Growth Forest	\$400,000	500
	Sweet Spring Hollow	\$225,950	232
	Lower Blackwater	\$208,000	415
	Bullpasture River	\$289,551	177
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$6,111,889</b>	<b>8,550 acres</b>



# Scoring Criteria: Natural Areas

## Category

**The Natural Heritage Biodiversity Rank of the Natural Heritage conservation site, based upon the global and state rarity of the natural heritage resources present, the number of natural heritage resources present, and their condition.**

**Maximum score: 20.**

B1=20

B2=15

B3 or B4 =10

B5=5

No natural heritage resources = 0



## Scoring Sheet Criteria For: Natural Areas Category

**2. Size & Natural Condition:** Are the size and condition of the tract(s) adequate to protect and allow for management of natural heritage resource targets?

**Maximum score: 15**

- Size and condition are adequate to fully protect & manage targets = 15
- Size and condition are likely to provide for full protection and management of targets = 10
- Size and condition are unlikely to allow protection & management of the conservation targets = 0-5



## Scoring Sheet Criteria For: Natural Areas Category

**3. Proximity: Is the tract(s) adjacent to or in close physical or functional proximity (e.g. upstream or upslope) to other conservation lands and would it expand the protection of natural heritage resources? Maximum score: 15**

- Adjacent to existing conservation land = 15

- Possesses physical or functional proximity to existing conservation 10

- No physical or functional proximity



## Scoring Sheet Criteria For: Natural Areas Category

**4. Management: Applicants capability to implement necessary management to protect the site from short-term and long-term stresses. Maximum score: 10**

- Applicant has proven experience with natural community/rare species management = 10
- Applicant has land management experience = 5
- Applicant has no proven land management experience = 0





## **Scoring Sheet Criteria For: Natural Areas Category**

**5. Community Representation: To what extent does the site support exemplary natural communities that are not well protected in Virginia? Maximum score: 10**

- Supports communities not found on other protected lands = 10**
- Supports communities found on limited number (1–10) of protected lands = 5**
- Supports communities well represented (10+) on other protected lands = 0**



## **Scoring Sheet Criteria For: Natural Areas Category**

**6) No. & Quality of EOs: How many element occurrences are known for the tract(s) and what is the quality of those occurrences? Assign the value below for each occurrence based on it's EO-rank. Sum these values.**

**Maximum score: 10**

**A-rank=4**

**D-rank=1**

**B-rank=3**

**E(extant)-rank=**

**C-rank=2**



# Natural Area Preserve Dedication

- 10.1-1022.1 D. All property for which a matching grant is made pursuant to this section shall be dedicated as a natural area preserve as provided in § 10.1-213.
- Dedication instrument is designed to assure conservation of rare plant and animal species and natural communities of the site, and thus can be fairly restrictive.
- Signed by landowner and DCR Director.





## **Primary Contacts:**

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**Tom Smith (804) 786-4554**

**[Tom.Smith@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:Tom.Smith@dcr.virginia.gov)**

# **Questions?**



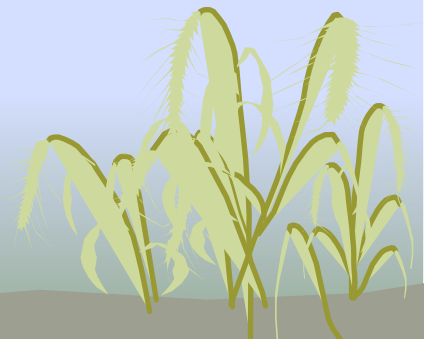
# APPLICATION WEAKNESSES

- ⇒ **Match not clearly identified or non-existing**
- ⇒ **No clear indication that project can be completed within two years from grant award**
- ⇒ **No clear demonstration that property to be protected is of real significance at the regional and/or state or federal level**



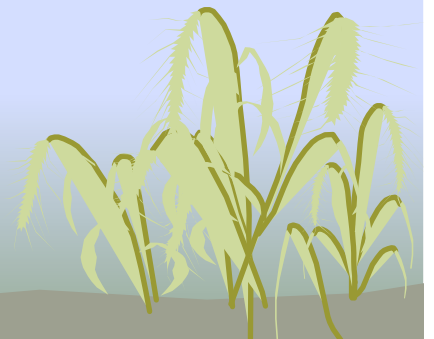
# APPLICATION WEAKNESSES

- ⇒ **Does not clearly show how project supports Virginia Outdoors Plan or a local or regional plan**
- ⇒ **No indication that property owner is willing to have proposed easement on his property**
- ⇒ **No clear demonstration of the actual degree of threat to the property**



# APPLICATION WEAKNESSES

- ⇒ **Not explicitly addressing all items in the application form**
- ⇒ **Failure to address all scoring criteria for your category**
- ⇒ **Providing an entire plan or study rather than just the excerpt from the plan that supports application**



# APPLICATION WEAKNESSES

⇒ **Not providing the correct number of copies (10)**

⇒ **emailing application is encouraged but not required – email to [sarah.richardson@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:sarah.richardson@dcr.virginia.gov)**

⇒ **Not submitting application on 8.5 x 11 inch paper**

